

A word on the world of odd serial numbers

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—I've found two special \$20 bills, one with serial number G52186437E and the other with C93256748A. As you can see, one has all the numbers 1 to 8 and the other all the numbers 2 to 9. How much are they worth?

W.O., Chicago

A—A hobby catalog suggests that bills with "catch" serial numbers might retail for face value plus \$5 to \$100 or more, depending on the level of oddity.

Your \$20s probably would fall at the lower end of that range because their serial numbers lack the fascination of rarer varieties, such as all digits the same or seven zeros followed by another digit (such as G0000008A). Bills in uncirculated condition bearing

such numbers might fetch \$125 plus face value.

Q—We've got \$190 tied up in \$1 silver certificates, all from series 1957, 1957A or 1957B. They came out of our billfolds years ago. Are we better off letting this money earn interest in the bank?

J.K., Lisle

A—Silver certificates of the various 1957 series still are common among hobbyists even though it's been about 30 years since Uncle Sam printed such money. A dealer advertising in a recent issue of Coin World offered to pay \$1.75 each for "crisp, uncirculated" specimens of series 1957 silver certificates, but I know of no dealer who will give more than face value for se-

ries 1957s that show considerable wear from use.

Based on this price record, you might save the silver certificates that rate "uncirculated" or nearly so and spend the rest.

Q—As a senior citizen who still looks for old money, I'm anxious to know what my series 1953 \$2 bill and series 1963 \$5 bill, each with a red seal and serial numbers, might be worth.

M.M., Palatine

A—Your items probably would retail for \$1 to \$8 over face value, depending on condition. Collectors have saved tens of thousands of the so-called "United States notes" with red seals, which were last printed in the 1960s.